

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 remain in this application. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 8-11, 13, 15, 17, 18 and 20 were rejected. The indication that the remainder of the claims would be allowable in independent form is noted with appreciation. However, for the reasons given below, Applicant submits that, as amended, all claims are allowable.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 9, 11 and 13 were rejected as anticipated by Shibazaki et al. (US2001/0038500A1). Regarding the amended claim 1, the feature that "one of the optical elements is cemented mutually with the other optical elements" is disclosed in Fig. 10A of the present invention. Also, the feature that "one of the optical element is cemented mutually with a sandwiching member which is cemented with the other optical element" is disclosed in Fig. 10b of the present application.

In Fig. 24 of Shibazaki et al., a lens 92a, a lens 92b, an optical element holding device 93, a plate spring 94, a sub-barrel 91b, and a barrel 91c are disclosed. In a case such as this, the lens 92a and the lens 92b are supported in the barrels 91b, 91c separately. In particular, there is a plate spring 94 between the lenses 92a and 92b. Therefore, the lenses are not cemented with each other in Shibazaki et al.

Also, the optical element holding device 93 is disposed on an outer periphery of the barrel 91c. The lenses 92a and 92b are supported inside the barrels (sub-barrels 91b and 91c). Therefore, the optical element holding device 93 is not cemented to the lenses 92a and 92b.

It becomes apparent then that, as explained above, the limitations that "wherein one of the at least three elements is cemented with the other optical elements which neighbors in an optical axis or with the sandwiching member which is cemented with the other optical element" is not disclosed in Shibazaki et al. Thus, Applicant believes that amended claim 1 is not anticipated by Shibazaki et al.

With amended claim 2, the outer periphery of the lens 92a disclosed in Fig. 25 in Shibazaki et al. does not expand in an optical axis direction. As a result, the limitation added by

claim 2 is also not anticipated by Shibazaki et al. Claims 4, 9, 11 and 13 all depend directly or indirectly on claim 1 and are allowable as claim 1 is allowable.

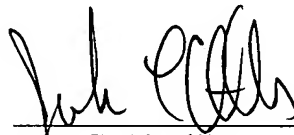
Claims 6, 8, 10, 15, 17, 18 and 20 were rejected as obvious over Shibazaki et al. in view of well-known art. Since the basic teaching of limitations in claim 1 is missing from Shibazaki et al. these claims, all of which depend directly or indirectly on claim 1 are also allowable.

In view of the above, Applicant believes that all claims remaining in this application are in condition for allowance, prompt notice of which is respectfully solicited.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (202) 220-4200 to discuss any information concerning this application.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17 or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,



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